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AFRICANS AT HOME.

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Abrégé des Voyages. Par MONS. DE LA HARPE. Paris : 1780.

Ashantee. By JOHN BEECHAM. London : 1841.

THE condition of the African race, for some years past has occupied such a degree of popular attention as to have been the source of great misunderstandings, many misrepresentations, violent hostilities, unwise and immature legislation, and a vast quantity of insane philanthropy, all of which, we fear, will result in very little profit to that peculiar people. To contribute to the better understanding of the subject, we have undertaken, in this article, to give a rapid but faithful sketch of the present wretched condition of the Af-

28

rican, and to show that this condition has continued substantially, if not literally, the same, for the last three hundred years, and as far back as we have any accounts of this peculiar people.

We know nothing of Africa, in the times of the Greeks and Romans, save of Egypt, Nubia, and the parts bordering upon the Mediterranean. The interior was then too barbarous and insignificant to invite curiosity, cupidity or conquest. From the *Periplus* of Hanno, the celebrated Carthaginian navigator, we have only a coasting voyage, as the word implies, from Gibraltar to Cape Bojador, beyond the Senegal, on the coast of Guinea; and the impression then entertained, of the savage and degraded character of the inhabitants, is to be inferred from the fact that they are supposed to have caught Ourang Outangs, or a species of monkey, whom they took for the women of the country, and having flayed them, brought their skins back to Carthage, where they were deposited with the other curiosities, and an account of the voyage, in the Temple of Juno, which was their Museum. This account being read by Aristotle, it is supposed that he influenced his scholar, Alexander, to contemplate the circumnavigation of Africa; which, however, was not effected. At a subsequent period, the Arabian geographers seem to have entertained but vague and conjectural ideas of that region. No one, in those days, ever seems to have contemplated an examination of the interior. Even the Portuguese did not attempt it after they had made their settlements. It was left for the enterprise of a Park and his subsequent followers, in modern times.

But, long before the time of Park, the enterprise of Portugal had made the first lodgement on the coast of Africa, and set the example of that coasting trade with that continent, which has been, more or less, ever since in the hands of the Dutch, the English, the Spanish and the American Nations. Yet, with all their factories, their posts, their forts and their castles, they have been able to penetrate but a small distance from that sickly and densely wooded coast, and we have advanced but very little way in the extent of our knowledge of Africa since the cry of Gama, in 1498,

“Bonnes nouvelles, bonnes nouvelles, des rubies, des émeraudes, des épices, des pierreries, toutes les richesses de l’univers”—instigated that enterprise and passion for gold, new countries, new lands and new homes, which has scarcely yet lost any of its vigour and activity. Wondrous changes this passion has produced and is still producing! Where will it stop? He only that can look into futurity may answer, and without asking aid from “celestial telegraphs.”

But has this great move—this world’s progress—redounded nothing to the profit of poor doomed, dark, night-covered Africa? Was she merely intended by Divine Providence to afford the means of working out the civilization and the exaltation of all other countries, and of all other races but her own? We think not. But God has his own ways of working out his will; and man in vain may think to amend his decrees, or set them at defiance. Do those who believe in the Bible, dare to disown that Providence which acknowledges some favoured races, and places curses and trials upon others? Why is it so? When we are as wise as Deity itself, then may we say why there shall be rich and poor, sick and healthy, strong and weak, the beautiful and the ugly, the Apollo and Caliban, a Washington and a Jonathan Wild, a Napoleon and an idiot, the robber and the honest labourer—in short, happiness and misery! Why the wealth and superabundance of the one, and the toilsome, loathsome labour of the other, in the service of the rich—a labour which yields no stores, but affords merely the wretched means of staving off starvation from the destitute and his numerous family of suffering children?

There is a Law on the subject, and that law has been given man by his Maker from above. The violation of that law, though we may not see why it should be so, or believe it the origin of these inequalities, is the true source of all the misery and of all inequality on earth. Not that virtue is always rewarded among men; for we are not told of recompense, but duty. Reward is not for us to challenge and demand—only obedience is ours. Enough that the violator of God’s laws takes heed; for it is visited upon the heads of generations untold. And let no man point his finger to heaven and

say "it is there done ; it is He that did it ;" for the evil is the result of his own folly or misdeeds, of his neglect of that self-restraint and that forbearance, which heaven exacts as the price of our happiness and advancement while on earth. What is true of one man, may be true of a family ; and what is true of a family, may be true of nations—the mere aggregate of families. Terrible are the judgments of heaven. Inscrutable the ways of Providence ; and whole nations are made to bear the penalties, through long ages, of the violations of law which they simply sanction.

While the rest of the world has made such rapid strides in the advancement of the condition of its inhabitants, it becomes an interesting inquiry, if Africa has made any, and to what degree ? In this article we propose to take a condensed view of her condition, from the period of the Portuguese discoveries to the present day. For this purpose we have placed at the head of this article La Harpe's collection of old voyages, and the recent work by John Beecham, of the London Wesleyan Mission, the very last that has fallen under our observation. These are acknowledged authorities, which should suffice for our purpose. In a future number, should leisure and inclination serve, we propose to give a similar sketch of the condition of such Africans as have been removed from their original home, and now exist in other countries, either in a state of freedom or of bondage. We think that we can show that no part of the race has been so advanced in morals and happiness as that portion which has been expatriated ; and that the part which most excels in all that makes approach to civilization, is that which remains in slavery in the Southern States of this Union.

Snelgrave gives the following myth, as commonly believed on the Gold Coast, as the history of the origin of the African race. It will be seen, hereafter, that the same tradition substantially exists to this day among this people.

The three sons of Noah, being each of a different colour, met, after the death of their father, to make partition of his goods and chattels ; that is to say, of the gold, of the silver, of the precious stones, of the ivory, of the linen, of the stuffs of silk and cotton, of the horses, of the camels, of the beeves,

the cows, the sheep, the goats and other animals, not to speak of arms, of furniture, of grain, tobacco and pipes. But he that was white, not caring for sleep, arose so soon as he saw the two others buried in its embrace, and seizing upon the gold, the silver, and the most precious effects, fled with them for the country now inhabited by the Europeans. The Moor, upon awaking, perceived the larceny, and determined, on the spot, to follow the bad example. He appropriated the tapestries, with the other movables, placed them upon the backs of the horses and camels, and made off, in like manner, with the white. The Negro, who had the misfortune to be the last to awaken, was confounded at the treachery of his brothers. There remained to him but two pieces of cotton goods, some pipes, a little tobacco and the millet. After abandoning himself for a while to his grief, he took a pipe and thought no more of pursuit or vengeance ; but, at the same time, resolved, as the best means of reprisal, to lose no occasion for stealing, in his turn. This resolution he never failed to keep so long as he lived, and his example has become the rule for his posterity ; and, therefore, to this day, he has continued the same practice.—(*Abrégé des Voyages*, tom. 3, p. 137.)

Could Theophrastus or La Bruyere have sketched a picture of life more characteristic, or by any process exhibit more clearly and briefly the difference of races ? How well is the vigilant, active white man, contrasted with the drowsy, slothful black man, while the copper-coloured race holds the intermediate ground between them. As the monkeys with them are also great thieves, the negroes believe them to be something of their own kind, of a race damned, and who could talk, no doubt, if their malignity did not tie up their tongues. One species, says Bosman, they call "*petits hommes barbut, ou de monkeys*, which signifies *petits moines* (little monks). Their skins are used for *fetische*." Park, speaking of the Mandingoes, says—"three-fourths of the negroes are slaves, without any hope of ever ceasing to be otherwise."—(*Abrégé des Voyages*, tom. 31, p. 16.) This concurs with the earliest account of them. They will rejoice, say

travellers, in the midst of death, and if they saw their country in flames they would not cease their dance or song. They are not capable of any sentiment of humanity or affection. Scarcely would one of them take the trouble to give another a drink of water if he were dying and asked for it. Their wives and children are the first to abandon them on such occasions. There are many negroes, we are told, who profess to believe in two gods ; the one *white*, whom they call *Jangu-mon*, or the good man. They regard him as the special god of the Europeans. The other *black*, whom they call after the Portuguese, *demonio* or devil, and whom they believe to be very bad, taking pleasure only in doing evil. They tremble at his name. He is their evil genius, a sort of Manicheism of good and evil !

Their ideas of creation are that God made the whites and the blacks, and that, after he had considered his work, he made them two presents, to wit: gold and the knowledge of the arts. The negroes having the first liberty of choosing, decided for the gold, and left to the whites the arts and the knowledge of writing and reading. God, they say, assented to the choice, but irritated at the folly and avarice of the blacks, declared that they should be forever the slaves of the whites. "This fable," says the author, "has more of good sense than that we have just reported of the division between the three brothers, and would do honour to the most enlightened people."—(*Abrégé des Voyages*, tom. 3, p. 155.)

The word *Feitisso*, or Fetiche, or Fetish, is Portuguese in origin, and signifies *charm* or amulet. In African, it is *Bossum* or *Bosum*, which means God. A chicken, a fish-bone, a stone, a feather, the skull of a monkey, the least *bagatelle*, becomes a Fetiche. Every negro has one upon his person, in his canoe, or in his cabin, and it passes as an heritage. They buy them at high prices from their priests. They are affixed to their doors, as a security to their houses against the intrusion of the devil and his imps, and against witchcraft. So, we have seen among superstitious negroes in America, old horse shoes nailed over doors with the same object. They have their public and private fetiches. They some-

times become national deities. It is felony to kill a fetiche fish or bird, insect or reptile.

Left to themselves in infancy, they abandon themselves to continued idleness. Neglected by their families, they run in troops about the fields, or in their public places, and roll about and wallow in the dirt and mud like so many pigs. No connections, no relations in life, are sacred, or even respected. Neither that of father, nor mother, nor parent, nor child, nor husband, nor any other, beyond the authority which the king has over all, and the noble over his wives and slaves, and the man generally over the woman. Blood, as wine with us, is their favourite and most honoured drink. To inflict a wound, or even death, is an imperial luxury, and reserved for the nobility and princes. A common practice of the African, is to place his knees upon the breast of a captured enemy, and, after a gash with a knife, to tear out the lower jaw-bone while the victim is yet alive, and to suffer him thus to linger and die. An inhabitant of Commodo assured Barbot, that he himself had treated thus *thirty-three* men in one battle; and he dwelt with satanic pleasure upon the horrid mode in which he performed the operation. It was delightful to recount. They cut open pregnant women, and tear out the infants from their wombs. The child they crush to death by beating it with the head of its mother. They inflict mortal wounds upon inoffending people, in the wildest caprice, and catch the blood as it runs or spirts from the wound, and drink it in the presence of the victim, while yet alive and suffering. If they have no enemy upon whom they can thus indulge their diabolical passions, they turn their rage upon their own subjects, or even their own families. While Bosman paid a visit to a prince or king, named Auta, on the Gold Coast, amidst their amusements, a negro having touched a part of the dress of one of the king's wives, he killed him and took a long draught of his blood. A little before this performance, for a mere trifle, he cut off the hand of one of his wives, and, the better to enjoy his cruelty, made her comb his head with the other hand and dress his hair. They hate each other to such a degree that their battles are simple butcheries; and those

that survive, having no other mode left for glutting their vengeance, surfeit themselves by feasting upon the flesh of their dead enemies, and taking their skulls and jaw-bones to ornament their drums and portals, if such a word can be applied in connection with the dog-kennels which they inhabit. They have but one kind of industry—they are all *chevaliers d'industrie*. They all pick and steal, according to the obligation of the legend.

When the Portuguese settled on the African coast, the use of maize, or Indian corn, was not known to them. It was introduced, says La Harpe, on the Gold Coast by the Portuguese, from the Island of St. Thomas.—(*Abrégé des Voyages*, tom. 3, p. 181.) It has multiplied and is now one of their greatest blessings. It was spread all over the country in Snelgrave's time. The Portuguese called it *milho-grande*, or large millet; the Italians, *Turkey corn*; and the French, *Spanish corn*. The *true millet*, is the Portuguese *milho-piqueno*, or little millet; and this word *piqueno* is that from whence our negroes in America call their little children *pickaninny*. So their expression, "*me no sabby*," (I do not know,) is from the Spanish, "*yo no saber*." In this country the men have *wool* and the sheep *hair*. They have herds of wives, and Bosman saw a negro who boasted of having more than two hundred. Another, with a sigh, complained that he had but seventy, having lost an equal number. But we will see, by and bye, that others had them by thousands. Armies are actually raised, composed entirely of sons, and sons and slaves. Sometimes a family is composed of two thousand members, not counting daughters, besides the dead. Their riches consist in the multitude of their wives and children. Reserving a few of the elder males, the rest of the children are sold as slaves. A common habit is to emasculate them in part, to diminish the breed and save food. The king of the small country of Juida alone, sold one thousand slaves in open market every month.—(p. 239.) Upon the death of the father, the eldest son inherits all his wives, whom he immediately receives as his own wives, his mother alone being excepted. She becomes, herself, a mistress, and is entitled to a separate house. Gaming is their great passion.

They will bet all they possess, and, after losing all their property, will bet their wives, their children, and finish even with themselves. They consider the white man's God too much elevated above them to be occupied with their wants, and that, therefore, he has entrusted them to the government of the *Fetiche*.—(p. 242.) Having some idea of the white man's God, they still think that their lot is to serve the devil; and they do so most ambitiously.

A serpent constitutes one of their greatest Fetiches. Temples are built in his honour. Should black or white happen to kill him, though by accident or mistake, the whole nation is enraged; and, if the offender be a negro, he is killed on the spot. If a white man, he escapes their fury only at the cost of a round penalty in money. Should the serpent take possession of your bed, you must give it up to him. So, also, of your table, though your dinner be upon it. Whole droves of hogs are knocked on the head as criminals, should they happen to eat up one of these reptile deities. At Sabi, they maintain the *Cathedral Temple* to this Serpent God; and the father, the fattest and largest of snakes, enjoys that distinction. The negro priests manage to turn a profitable penny by penances exacted of the superstitious; and tricks are played by them that might astonish even the Misses Fox, and other notable rapping geniuses of our times. We recommend to these geniuses particularly to read the full details given to us by our author, (in order to the improvement of their own arts,) to be found in *Abrégé des Voyages*, tom. 3, p. 255. Those who are initiated in the priesthood, are threatened with death if they reveal the secrets of their art and mysteries. A funny case of detection is mentioned, which the reader must look for in the original. The terror of the people, and a discreet fear of injuries which may be inflicted by him, gives to the high priest a power equal to that of their kings. He, too, has his table-turnings, spiritual rappings, celestial telegraphs, and a sufficiently credulous circle of believing citizens. Frequently, applications are made to the Fetiches for counsel or aid in emergencies. A present of *rum* and gold dust is very conciliatory. The priest, after a time, is wrought upon like a sibyl; shakes

with fury and foams at the mouth ; growls like a tiger and asks for *rum*. "The spirit then begins to influence," and the developements follow the rum. To administer *adum* or the oath, liquor is the most valued mode of trial.—(*Beecham*, p. 220.)

All these things occur on the Slave Coast. The kings keep pens or prisons, called by the French "*captiveries*," in which all their slaves for market are placed. Should the supply be deficient, they do not hesitate to sell their wives, and put upon them the mark of the company that becomes the purchaser. To complete a cargo, in 1693, Philips says, the king sold three or four hundred of his wives, and seemed much pleased with his bargain. At the least disgust, says Bosman, the king will sell eighteen or twenty of his wives ; but that, he says, cannot diminish the number ; for he has three principal captains, whose only office is to fill up the vacancies. As still, in some parts of civilized Europe, each family considers it an honour to yield a daughter to the pleasures of their master. Women, however, sometimes commit suicide to escape it, and prefer death to such a wretched sacrifice.

After the death of a king, for four or five days, every thing is abandoned to misrule and slaughter. Without slaughter and bloodshed, there can be neither honour nor amusement to an African. Persons found in the streets on these occasions are robbed and slain. The High Priest selects eight of the principal wives and buries them alive with the corpse. After this special sacrifice of the women, men, in unlimited numbers, are also immolated.

Upon the death of the King of Benin, a large ditch was dug, into which was thrown his body. A number of domestics, of both sexes, were covered over *alive* with the dead body. For some days after a trap-door, or covering, was raised to inquire of the king ; and, upon the least cry of suffering, the hole was again closed. The same thing was repeated, day by day, until all sound had ceased to issue from the cavern. The ditch being finally closed, the new king is proclaimed, and the night is filled with disorder. Men, beasts, every thing found in the streets, are killed and thrown

upon the sepulchral fosse. "What frightful customs," says the author! "It seems that under this burning sun the heads of men are agitated with a sanguinary delirium, and that these savages feel a frightful proclivity to crime, superstition and blood. Such is man in a state of nature, much below the tiger and the monkey, until their reason is cultivated." Too lazy, they have no taste for work, and put it all upon the women and slaves. Utterly uncivilized and debased, how can they begin to improve? If, in two thousand years and upwards, they have made no progress, how much will they make in two hundred thousand? We are not rejoicing over the enumeration of their degradations. We are calmly and fairly dissecting and exposing their nature, as it is found in a state which a stupid philanthropy still professes to prefer as a state of freedom!

The people of Benin think there is no use in worshipping God, for he is obliged to be good; but the devil, being an evil spirit, capable of doing them harm, it is necessary to appease him by prayers and sacrifices. Somewhat upon the principle that offices among us are bestowed by politicians upon those whom they fear, rather than those they love—those who work against, rather than work for them. Human sacrifices are made on the occasion of most important ceremonies. If the necessary number cannot be had from the prisons, the streets are patrolled at night, and every one seized who may be found without a light. The poor thus become the victims, and are immolated, without the slightest pity or remorse. The people of Loango do not believe that men ever die of a natural death. What a sad moral does that teach. They believe in *Mokissos* or sorcerers, "swearing drinks" and exorcising; and many persons are tried for crimes by these absurd devices. If, upon the swallowing of certain "swearing drinks," one urinates freely, he is declared innocent; if he falls down, he is condemned. The rich are allowed to make trial *by their slaves*. Pardon or acquittal, however, may, at any time, be bought at the cost of a few slaves and a little rum. The whole affair shows skilful artifice and imposture. In this way enemies, however innocent, are made to fall, to gratify the vindictive and to profit

the avaricious. According to their own accounts, the King of Loango, in Congo, has only the moderate number of *seven thousand wives*. The chief wife, *Makonda*, has great power over the king, by right of their institutions; and if he offends her, she has the right to take his life with her own hands. If she is of an age for pleasure, she may select her own man, who thereby becomes ennobled. But let him take care should he be surprised with another woman! His head pays for it! He has no such privileges as his betters!

Unlike the fashions of the former kings of France, it is death to look at the king while he eats or drinks. A child of seven years old, son of a noble of the first class, unfortunately fell asleep one day in the eating apartment of the king, and awoke just as the despot was putting his cup to his mouth. The child was condemned to death, the only indulgence being a delay of six or seven days through respect to the father. After this brief respite, the head of the innocent was crushed by blows given him with a hammer upon his nose; and the priest was careful that his blood fell upon *Mokissos*, or idols of the king. He was then dragged through the highway by a rope tied around his neck. Another case is reported still stranger and of equal atrocity. A son of the king, eleven or twelve years of age, having entered the hall while his father drank, was seized by the order of this prince, clad immediately in a rich habit, and treated with all kinds of rich drinks and food, but no sooner had he finished this sinister feast, than he was cut into quarters and distributed to various parts of the city, with proclamations of the cause of his punishment. Another child, still younger, had his head cut off at the instance of the High Priest, because, under similar circumstances, he had run to embrace the knees of his father. The High Priest caught drops of his blood, with which he rubbed the arms of the king to divert the evil presage. The same law even extends to a dog or beast. What comes from the king's table must be buried. No one must touch it. "*Que d'extravagance et de barbarie!*" says our author: "*Quand l'homme est fait ainsi, est il un plus odeux et m prisable animal?*" The ceremonies necessary to create a new *Mokissos*

or divinity, are given by our author.—(p. 326.) This is managed by “*convulsionnaires énergumens démoniaques*,” who play a similar rôle with our *mediums* in the spirit-rapping circles. “*Faut il (says he) que des nations policières aient à rougir d’avoir sus chez elles les memes extravagances?*” Should not civilized nations blush at similar extravagances exhibited at their own doors.

In Congo, the negroes are generally black, but some are found of an olive colour. Their lips are not long and pendant as the Memedeans and the other negroes. Their hair, black and frizzled, is sometimes *red*, according to the author, though we doubt the truth of the statement. They might dye it, or it might be of a foxy brown. Their thick lips, flat nose, woolly hair, and the line of the face sloping backwards, deny to them all beauty, and suggest little hope of the exercise of intellectual energy or further developement.

They have no science or inclination to cultivate their minds in any manner. They count the years by winters, which commence in May and finish in November. They count the months by moons, and the days of the week by their markets; but they have no further division of time. Living in their little mud and straw hovels or folds, the best of them raise a few chickens, grow a little rice, or millet, or Indian corn—have a few sugar-canes and guber-nuts (ground-nuts), scarcely equalling the possessions of our worst treated slaves, and by no means so well housed, and infinitely below the average condition of our blacks in the slave States. The wealth of the Mosicongos consists mostly of slaves and ivory. Congo, Songo and Bamba sell few slaves, as they are not valued on account of their excessive laziness and incapacity to work. The missionaries have never been able to cure them of concubinage. They will take as many mistresses as they can keep. Sometimes they take them on trial. The Christian method seems to them unprofitable and not “*convenable*.” After a few weeks’ trial, if the husband is disappointed or displeased, he returns the wife to her father. It does the lady no damage. “*Elle ne tröve pas moins l’occasion de subir bientôt une nouvelle épreuve*.” Sometimes the women are vested with similar rights, and the writer

says, "*qu'elles sont plus inconstantes et plus opiniâtre que les hommes.*" While the husband eats, the wives and children wait upon him. (Not all, we presume.) As soon as born the children are submitted to the priest, and nothing can exceed their slavish obedience to him in their future growth and progress.

At St. Paul, in Loanda, the Portuguese frequently possessed two or three hundred slaves in their service, and some even three thousand. There were many mulattoes who bore a mortal hatred to the negroes. The worst atmosphere of Africa is that of Benguila. It is dangerous to land on that coast, or to drink the water. The food itself seems imbued with disease. The whites there look like the dead risen from the tombs. The women often entice men into their arms in order to betray them, and that they may be apprehended by the husbands and sold as slaves. They are trained for the purpose. In Angola there are two kinds of slaves—one attached to the domain of the nobles, and the other ordinary slaves, acquired by war or purchase. The people of Angola amass no riches, but are content with a little millet, some beasts, and their palm oil and palm wine. No where are beasts of burthen known. Their great trade with Europeans consists in slaves, which were carried principally to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. The Spaniards and Portuguese, at an early period, exported some fifteen thousand each annually; and their agents bought, in the interior, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand. When they arrived at the coast they were meagre and feeble, from bad nourishment, and sleeping on the ground in the open air. They were, however, fattened up before transportation, and considerable care taken of their health. The sick were removed to separate lodgings by the Portuguese, and were supplied with a salutary regimen. Their sale to the Europeans necessarily wrought great and beneficial changes in their condition as a race. It helped the morals of the despots who sold, and the safety as well as morals of the victims. They were no longer slain because of scarcity of provisions, as is frequently done by native chiefs, or if they became unsaleable for any cause. In the

vessels of transport, mats were then furnished, and regularly changed at fixed periods :—“ *L’avarice même peut donc quelquefois ramener a l’humanité !*” Avarice even teaching that humanity which modern philanthropy has denied them. The preventive measures now well known to the world, have contributed to, rather than have diminished the horrors of this wretched traffic. Forced upon the colonies against their will by Great Britain, that she might reap the full advantage of the Methuen Treaty, or Assiento Contract, she now, with all the affected prudery of a decayed strumpet, turns up eyes of holy horror to God, at the existence of slavery in America—the fruit of her own vices. She would add new-fold horrors to the wretched condition of these people, to prove the extent of her new-born virtue. And Wilberforce, with his grinning, satisfied air of self-importance, is BREVETTED a great man ! The idea that self-interest might teach men humanity where nature did not prompt, seems to have escaped these people wholly, in their eagerness to prove their philanthropy and to effect our overthrow. If in time the trade had been recognized and directed, it might have saved many a poor creature from many of the worst horrors of the *middle passage*, and would not necessarily have increased the traffic, for new supplies would not then have been called for to supply vacancies occasioned by these very preventive or repressive measures. A lawful trade could have been regulated and restricted—that which became piratical, became, at the same time, solely under the controul of pirates. Mercy was thus denied by the folly of humanity. But meddling philosophy looks very far, says Mr. Dickens of Mrs. Jellaby ; strange, that the same person cannot see how greatly he himself deserves the same censure. There have been, we fear, too many Mrs. Jellaby’s for the good of mankind ; Jellaby’s in breeches as well as petticoats—fools and meddlers, of precious little good, either at home or to those of Borrioboola Gha, to the myriads who need the help of common sense and virtue, rather than that philanthropy which appears to possess so little of either.

The Jaggas are spread over the whole of Africa, from the confines of Abyssinia to the land of the Hottentots.

They are very black and ill-shaped. They trace lines upon their cheeks with a hot iron, and, showing only the whites of their eyes, are horrible to behold. They are entirely naked, and their whole manner indicates utter barbarism. They know no king, live in the forests, and, wandering like Arabs or jackals, they are led by their ferocity to ravage the country of their neighbours; and, during their attacks, utter frightful cries that inspire every one with terror. Their greatest opponents were a race of war-like women, whom Lopez describes as occupying *Monopotapa*, a people similar to the Amazons, now maintained by the King of Dahomey, and whose services it is said he has lately tendered to Louis Napoleon. If this is not upon the authority of Punch, it is very much like it. We have lost our reference. If in the sudden marches of these Jaggas, their wives give birth to children, they are immediately smothered. Such responsibilities are only so many *impedimenta* to such a life and people.

This brings us to the Hottentots, a word synonymous with every thing that is rude, ignorant, filthy, ugly, debased, savage and disgusting; and yet we believe the Hottentots are better than many, and quite as good as any of the African negro races. Their favourite vice, like others, is laziness. It prevails not only over their bodies but their minds. To reason is to labour, and labour of any kind is to them the greatest of evils. Constraint inspires them with horror; but, forced to work, they are docile, submissive and faithful. To begin to civilize the African, it seems absolutely necessary first to subdue him to the bit of bondage to a civilized race. Otherwise, he is as untameable as the Wild Zebra of his plains. Satisfy the present necessities of the Hottentots, and no prayers or considerations can force them from their natural indolence. Drunkenness is another of their vices, in which respect they differ from no Africans ever heard of. Give them brandy and tobacco, and they will drink, smoke and yell, until they lose their voices. They commit, it is said, most unnatural offences.—(*Abrégé des Voyages*, tom. 3, p. 422.) If you attempt to convince their old people of the odiousness of these practices, they say—

“These are the *usages* of the Hottentots.” That solves all difficulties and silences all reproach. Like the other nations of Africa, they immolate their children and old people. Their language is hard and inarticulate, and sounds like so much stuttering or grunting to the ears of the stranger. Dressed in sheep-skins, their naked heads are smeared and plaistered with fat and grease, to such a degree as to form a sort of bonnet of black mortar. They find it “very refreshing.” Their legs are naked and their breasts open; they expose their bellies to the middle. Only their narrow *kuthness* prevents the utter exposure of both sexes. Nothing is more captivating to them than an old brass button, or piece of broken mirror. They will give all their animals for such *bagatelles*. All classes take delight in greasing their bodies from head to foot with butter, or the suet of sheep, mixed with the soot from their pots. They renew this as often as it is dried by the sun. Like the skunk, they may be *nosed* at a great distance. “They smell *loud*,” as the Dutchmen or Boors would say. If the rich indulge themselves with the use of rancid butter, the poor besmear themselves with the fat from the bowels of slaughtered animals. Their whole body is invested with a thick coat of ointment, of some sort or other. Tufts of hard, coarse hair or wool and prominences of fat, jut out in various parts of the body and complete their deformity. Gluttonous and filthy beyond measure, they seize upon and tear out, like beasts of prey, the entrails from the belly of the animal only yet half dead, and devour them when but half roasted. Their villages are composed of hovels formed of twigs and clay, and are too low to stand in upright. And yet their stupid aspect has been said by writers, scarcely less stupid, to be owing not to their national character, prevalent over all Africa, but to the state of bondage they are held in by the Boors or Dutch settlers! Were they any better before the whites settled there? But the Bosjosmans, of the same race?—They have never been conquered or enslaved. They have preserved their independence and their primitive habits; and what is their condition? “Of all human beings, their condition is, perhaps, the most forlorn.” Alas! poor creatures, as our

slave negroes often say of the free negroes—"they have got no masters."

The best race in all Africa is the Caffre, and these the English are now endeavouring to destroy—all for the good of humanity—that sort, at least, which may be called British humanity. To teach them to use opium, perhaps?

But, to return to the Hottentots. Kolben thinks their habits, so disgusting to us, are the very best for them. *Quien sabé? Chacun a son gout.* Their filth subjects them to all sorts of vermin, and to a particularly filthy kind, not to be mentioned to polite ears, of an extraordinary size. But they have their revenge; for the troublesome beast is, in its turn, eaten by him it troubles. Surprised with a heap of these animals, they attribute their treatment of them to a principle of retaliation. The worn-out shoes of Europeans, made of raw-hide, are steeped for awhile in water, then roasted and eaten. They would rather lose a tooth than a small piece of tobacco. Their hovels resemble ovens. Those who have killed a lion, tiger, leopard, elephant or rhinoceros, are knighted with great ceremony. The whole kraal assembled, forms circles round him in a squatting position like his own, as our sand-hill people do when they *romance* together. The deputies of Elders (earls) or chiefs approach, and ——— but for a full description of this quaint ceremony, the curious reader must consult the original.

Thus have we given a rapid sketch of such parts of Africa as have furnished slaves to the European Colonies. We have run over the accounts of a series of travellers since the earliest settlements of the Portuguese in 1484. We will now take up Mr. Beecham, of the London Wesleyan Mission, our latest authority.

In Central and Western Africa, the few, says our author, are despots and the great mass slaves. In the Mahomedan states, running across the centre of Africa, the number of pagan negroes held in slavery is far greater than that of the free population. This is the best part of negro Africa; more enlightened than other parts, and containing many millions of inhabitants. The coast, including the interior for three hundred miles, is supposed to have thirty millions; and

Mahomedan Africa, including a part of the West, and most of Central Africa, must have a much larger population. This would give some forty or fifty millions, *the greater part of whom are slaves*. In Kano, Clapperton found the proportion of slaves *thirty to one*, and in another village *seventy to one*. In pagan Africa, however, says Beecham, slavery prevails still more extensively. Every noble in Ashantee owns thousands. Their lives and services are equally at the disposal of their masters. The nobles or *Caboceers*, in their turn, belong to the king, and he can take their property whenever he pleases.

The King of Ashantee justified the slave trade to Mr. Hutchinson, on the ground that the slave population at home was too numerous for public safety; and Mr. Beecham admits that the suppression of the foreign slave trade, however desirable, would not, therefore, of itself, remove the causes of domestic slavery at home.—(p. 119.) Remedial measures depend on the Africans themselves. Ten thousand prisoners in the Gaman War were put to death in cold blood. Many, moreover, died, “because,” said the king, this “country does not grow much corn;” and “unless I kill or sell them, they will grow strong and kill my people.” They believe the *Fetiché* makes war everywhere for strong men, because they can pay plenty of gold and make proper sacrifices. The law allows the King of Ashantee *three thousand three hundred and thirty-three wives*. These are attended by little boys with whips made of elephant’s hide, and they lash all who do not turn aside out of their way, or dare to look at them. Mr. Morris saw the King of Dahomey with *seven hundred and thirty wives* bearing provisions, and many more in troops of seventy following. In Yariba, even a caboceer or common noble often owns *two thousand*, and the king of that country told Clapperton that he really did not know how many wives and children he had, but that hand to hand they would reach from Katianga to Jannah, more than one hundred miles. Seventeen hundred to a mile, would give *one hundred and seventy thousand!* A nice little family indeed! In one visit which he paid the traveller, the king had five hundred wives along with him. All this glory should put the Mor-

mons to the blush ! Poor devils, their allowance is small, being limited to but a score or two apiece ! Wives are always *purchased*, not *courted*. A large family of daughters is, therefore, a fortune of itself ; and those who can afford to buy are rich, for they are his slaves, and the enjoyment of his indolence is the fruit of their labour. In most tribes the wishes of the female are not consulted at all. "All right," Mrs. Stowe would say, "in Africa, but very bad with us." Sometimes a wife is purchased before she is born. *Quando acciderunt*, as the law would say. This is called *consawing*. For a more full account of the *menage* of an Ashantee gentleman, the reader is referred to pages 125 to 128 of Mr. Beecham. If boys become perverse, their father cuts off their ears. The man eats alone. The rest of the family wait upon him. Unfaithfulness of the wife is punished—sometimes with death—but may be paid for by the paramour. Sometimes the nose of the wife is cut off, especially when a prudent fear of their family preserves them from the severer penalty of death. Husbands and fathers employ their wives and daughters to decoy others, who become slaves for their punishment, if they cannot pay the fine assessed by a *palaver*. Their *palavers* are their parliaments ; and bills of attainder pass upon incautious ladies, as sometimes happen with the great in haughty Christian Europe. The English fix their fines and prices for their wives in their *palavers*, but then it is mostly in aristocratic life. Perhaps this is the secret source of the great sympathy felt by such as are of Stafford House, for sons of Africa, who show so little for their own white tenants and starving poor. Psychology shows strange fancies of the mind, and it is a deep well whence to draw the truth. One of the most elegant and innocent exercises in which the ladies of Africa, even of rank, take the greatest delight, is that in which they beat a particularly prominent part of their bodies against each other, with such force that the vanquished party is thrown flat on the ground. We have seen overgrown urchins of the male sex, at the same sort of sport in Christian countries, but never the females.

If an Ashantee's wife indulges that curiosity, thought to

be so natural to the sex, and listens to a private conversation of her husband, he crops an ear off, and thereby punishes the offending member. If she betrays a secret, he cuts off her upper lip. Heavens, how few lips would be left for kissing, if this were common law with us! Beecham says—"The sight of women who have suffered such inflictions at this day, in Coomasie (Kurnasi), may be had, as it was in the time of Bowditch." The majority of the males, of course, have no wives, but they are slaves and need none in Borrioboola Gha. Celibacy is the general fate of the male slaves, who, however, constitute the principal military force. Of course prostitutes are openly countenanced, and many are maintained for state occasions—again like fashionable aristocratic society of Europe—and they are set apart with formalities and religious ceremonies. Wealthy females often bequeath them to the public on their death beds, as they endow with us a church, a school, or orphan asylum. The state lends its aid, and religion its authority, to confound vice with virtue, and to sanction and legalize crime and debauchery. This is the state of their present society, and it has been the same, no doubt, for centuries. Such has been the progress of civilization and Christianity among the Africans.

In the war between Ashantee and Denkæra, one hundred thousand men perished in one engagement, and an equal number soon afterwards in another battle, when Abu Behr was taken prisoner—showing that they can rival white men in nothing but destruction, and that havoc, however great, can be committed by a savage as well as by a Buonaparte. Fantee, which not long since was supposed to possess millions of inhabitants, has been reduced by the Ashantee invasion to some few thousands. It appears, from Beecham, that the tradition of the Creation, which we believe La Harpe takes from Bosman, still remains prevalent in Africa. "It is believed," says he, "that in the beginning of the world, God having created three white and three black men, with an equal number of women of each colour, resolved, in order that they might be left without complaint, to allow them to fix their own destiny, by giving them the choice of good

and evil. A large box or calabash was, in consequence, placed upon the ground, together with a sealed paper or letter. The black men had the first choice. They took the calabash, expecting that it contained all that was desirable; but, upon opening it, they found only a piece of gold, some iron and several other metals, of which they did not know the use. The white men opened the letter or paper, and it told them every thing. All this is supposed to have happened in Africa, where God kept the black men to the fate which their avarice had caused them to choose, and left them under the care of inferior deities; but conducting the whites to the water's edge, and communicating with them every night, taught them to build a vessel to take them to another country, from whence they now come to trade with the blacks, who had chosen gold instead of knowledge and letters." "In this tradition," says Beecham, "is to be found the source of those superstitions which enthrall millions of their race. God certainly made them black, and we are not sure, from that circumstance alone, that they are not right in supposing that they were intended as an inferior race; and we do not believe that they are happier for being made to rebel against their destiny and ancient belief." "We do not know," says a late writer on the Book of Job, "and cannot know, the mystery of the government of the world, and that it is not for man to seek it, or for God to reveal it." We believe that God did intend the black man to be inferior, or he would not have made him so. All inequalities of nature are of his doing, and who dares gainsay it? Did he not make the fool, the idiot, the dwarf, the deformed, the mute, the deaf, the blind, the leprous, the lunatic, the sound, the beautiful, the sane, the mediocre and the genius? Shall we set up one general wail and whine that the division has not been a fair one; that others have got more gold and more knowledge than falls to our lot? "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his house, nor his field, nor his servant, his ox, his ass, nor any thing that is his."

With these people even the crocodile sometimes receives divine honours, and being greatly petted, often becomes very tame; sometimes too familiar for safety, and now and then

picks up a child in his great jaws. Their *penates* are, generally, calabashes filled with rubbish of all sorts. Any thing for *Bossum*. They have about one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty evil days in the year, when the most important and pressing things *cannot* be done. An incredible amount of time is thus lost. Men on journeys, no matter how important, must stop on those days. The priests there undertake, sometimes, to conceal fugitive slaves, but it is said never fail to deliver them up to their masters, upon payment of a good fee or *Fetiche* money. These *Fetiche* oracles are said to be inaccessible to the poor. Believing that all good and evil comes from the *Fetiche*, they are, through that medium, completely in the power of the priesthood. The arts with which the latter maintain their power, are detailed by our author at page 191. Thousands of victims are immolated to these *Fetiches* at the instance of this priesthood.

Scarcely has one of their barbarous and bloody customs been abandoned, from the earliest period of which any thing is known of them. They still pave their court yards, palaces, and even the streets or market places of their villages or towns, with the skulls of those butchered in wars, at feasts, funerals, or as sacrifices to *Bossum*. Still their wives and slaves are buried alive, with the deceased husband or master. When Adahanzen died, two hundred and eighty of his wives were butchered before the arrival of his successor ; which put a stop to it only to increase the flow of blood and the number of deaths in other ways. The remaining living wives were buried alive ! amidst dancing, singing and bewailing, the noise of horns, drums, muskets, yells, groans and screechings ; the women, marching by headless trunks, bedaubed themselves with red earth and blood. Their victims were marched along with large knives passed through their cheeks. The executioners struggle for the bloody office, while the victims look on and endure with apathy. They were too familiar with the horrid sacrifice to show terror, or to imagine that all was not as it should be. Their hands were first chopped off, and then their heads *sawed* off, to prolong the amusement. Even some who assisted to fill

the grave were hustled in alive, in order to add to the sport or solemnity of the scene. Upon the death of a king's brother, four thousand victims were thus sacrificed. These ceremonies are often repeated, and hundreds slaughtered at every rehearsal. Upon the death of a King of Ashantee, a general massacre takes place, in which there can be no computation of the victims.

At their "Yam Customs," Mr. Bowditch witnessed spectacles of the most appalling kind. Every caboceer or noble, sacrificed a slave as he entered at the gate. Heads and skulls formed the ornaments of their processions. Hundreds were slain; and the streaming and steaming blood of the victims was mingled in a vast brass pan, with various vegetables and animal matter, fresh as well as putrid, to compose a powerful *Fetiche*. At these Customs the same scenes of butchery and slaughter occur. The king's executioners traverse the city, killing all they meet. The next day desolation reigns over the land. The king during the bloody saturnalia looked on eagerly, and danced in his chair with delight!

The King of Dahomey paves the approaches to his residence, and ornaments the battlements of his palace, with the skulls of his victims; and the great *Fetiche Tree*, at Badagry, has its wide-spread limbs laden with human carcasses and limbs. There the want of chastity is no disgrace, and the priests are employed as pimps. Murder, adultery and thievery, says Bosman, are here no sins.

The case of Quaake, given by our author, shows how vain is the hope of effecting a national regeneration by the education of Africans to the Christian ministry. In fifty years residence at Cape Coast Castle, he gained over not one of his countrymen—and dying, showed his confidence still reposed in his *Fetiche* and not in Christian rites. Well might Mr. Beecham remark, that "the case of this individual furnishes matter for grave consideration on the part of those who are anxious to promote the enlightenment and elevation of Africa."—(p. 258.) The English chaplains that succeeded Quaake soon died. So, the Danish Missionaries have all died. The English are all the time dying, or going home for their

health. Mr. Dunwell, the Wesleyan Missionary, died. Mr. and Mrs. Wrigley soon died. Mr. and Mrs. Harrop soon died. Mr. and Mrs. Freeman succeeded—the latter soon sickened and died, and Mr. Freeman was compelled to visit England for his health. He recovered and returned to the scenes of his labours, and to him we are indebted for much of the information contained in Mr. Beecham's book.

A *Fetiche* man, named Akwah, is mentioned, who would make a most distinguished table-mover and spirit-rapper. He could pound up beads into powder and instantly restore them. He could thrust his finger through a stone; and he could make people believe him, for he was dexterous in substituting one thing for another. He could call apes from the bushes and make them talk. This he could do in the night, but not in the day. Daylight did not suit his *Fetiche*. It preferred darkness. He took people into the bush and deceived them. Boys were sent out in the dark for the purpose of detection, and deposited bottles of rum. The monkeys smelt the rum and drank of it so freely that they were soon taken, and proved to be other boys disguised and instructed for the cheat. "Father, father, it is not an ape; I have caught a boy." "Hold fast," and before they could be brought to the light, old Akwah had taken to his heels and was never more seen at Cape Coast Castle. This broke the spell. So, no doubt, might some of our spells be broken. But Judge O'Neill would not consent to give "a little rum," even to detect an imposter, and gentlemen, like Cuffee, will still continue to believe. *Rum* is, no doubt, a potent finder out of other *spirits*.

One decided improvement and step towards advancement, Beecham thinks, is evident at Domonasi, where some of the Africans actually begin to wear European clothes, and beg for a fresh supply! Wonderful indeed! as if every savage on earth would not do the same? Has Mr. Beecham ever read Catlin's Indians of North America? We remember reading, sometime since, the travels of some young British officer, who visited Hayti in the course of a voyage, and was sent into the country from Port au Prince, to visit at his country residence some black general to whom he had

letters. Passing an extensive prairie with mountains on the back ground, he saw some object approaching, which, for his life, he could not comprehend. In a short time he came up with the very general of whom he was in search, and to his astonishment found the black gentleman upon a mule, without an article of clothes upon him, but a straw hat and a pair of spurs. Now, this general, according to Mr. Beecham, though one of the *distingúés*, or great men of Hayti, must have been much less civilized than another gentleman whom he met, who had on nothing but a cast-off short-tail European cavalry jacket, and was extremely elegant in his bows. Thinking of the "We'el done cutty sark" of Burns, we conceive, at a moment, how appropriate would be the presence of such civilized gentry, at a witch's festival or a devil's feast, such as they had in New-England, when Cotton Mather was an oracle, and such as they may still have on the weird summits of the Brocken.

A great mass of the negro territory is still an immense and impenetrable forest. The soil in many parts is extremely fertile, as is proved by the immense population it supports, for nowhere are these natural advantages less improved by man. A hoe, a little spade, with which he scratches the ground, is the highest degree of his agricultural advancement in Africa. There is no such thing as property in land. Mr. Henry Carey's theory of rent cannot prevail there. Manufacturing industry ranks still lower, though the producer and consumer lie down together—the wife being the producer and the husband the consumer; the happiest of industrial conditions. Notwithstanding, however, no treasury there can be filled but by the slave trade, and it is not thereby abolished, as Mr. Carey would suppose. Though a magnificent country for cotton, we need not fear their rivalry, as they have been brought here that the advantage might be mutually enjoyed of having the producer and consumer placed side by side. But the king wishing to replenish his treasury, instead of resorting to the "Loom, the Anvil and the Plough," fixes upon some village in his own or neighbour's territory, surrounds it in the night and sets fire to it. Attempting to escape, the wretched inhabitants are seized

and hurried off. The trial by ordeal, or "*swearing liquor*," already spoken of, prevails to a peculiar extent. It is impossible to name any region tolerably peopled, so illiterate as the African. They have neither alphabet, hieroglyphic, picture or symbol. Their villages are mere dog-kennels. Their family brawls, and the wranglings incident to their thousand wives, may well be conceived, and are only subdued and kept down after the failure of scolding and beating, by the terrors of Mumbo-Jumbo, the bugbear of the African ladies, and detector of adultery. Summoned before Mumbo-Jumbo, the unhappy one dares not disobey. Appearing before him, she is stripped naked in the presence of the bulk of her fellow-citizens, and undergoes a severe whipping, inflicted by the rod of Mumbo-Jumbo! And Mumbo-Jumbo is never known to grant a divorce.

In Dahomey, the greatest nobles cannot approach their king without throwing themselves flat on the ground, and laying their heads in the dust. The belief is instilled into them that their lives belong entirely to their sovereign. Human skulls and putrifying carcasses ornament their temples and their dwellings. Even the king's sleeping apartment is paved with human skulls. The Jaggas, represented for their extreme barbarity and ferocity two hundred years ago, retain still the same characteristics without any change. The same may be said of all those nations which inhabit that vast country called the Coast, from Senegal to the Cape of Good Hope. But, we must cease the disgusting picture of a people, whose savage and shocking barbarities, and loathsome habits, and horrid crimes, are supposed to establish a condition so preferable to that of slavery to the white man, that the fleets of civilized Europe and America, are employed to maintain and perfect them in it. D. J. M.
